Supporting Sustainable Management of Water in Sebou's Apple Farming

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Abstract

The Sebou Water Fund (SWF), established in 2019 by the NGO Living Planet Morocco (LPM) in collaboration with several national and international partners, represents a groundbreaking initiative within the Mediterranean basin and the MENA region. The SWF operates on the fundamental principle of "payment for ecosystem services" and is dedicated to promoting sustainable water resource management for the benefit of both society and the fragile ecosystems within the Sebou River basin. In response to the urgent need for sustainable water management in apple farming at the upstream part of the basin, the Sustain Sebou Farming project was launched in the Imouzzer Kandar region. Its main objectives include strengthening the capacity of local farmers in sustainable water management and sharing best practices at the local and national levels. Notably, the project is part of the SWF and aligns with its mission to promote sustainable water resource management. The project conducted a series of training workshops on water conservation practices, educating local apple growers on the importance of responsible water use. These workshops laid the foundation for knowledge and collaboration within the community. Furthermore, the project organized an exchange visit to the Souss Massa region, a pioneer in climate-smart irrigation, where participants learned valuable lessons and strategies for efficient water use. To demonstrate the effectiveness of various water conservation techniques, the project implemented five showcase projects. These projects showcased improved hydro-agricultural systems, precision irrigation, and the benefits of using low-flow drippers. Preliminary results indicate significant water savings and improved yields. The project's efforts to disseminate results and best practices extended to weekly markets, where extension and awareness-raising stands were set up. This approach allowed local farmers to access information and training tailored to their needs. A capitalization workshop held near Dayet Aoua lake brought together stakeholders from various institutions and the local community. It fostered collaboration between small-scale and large-scale apple growers and facilitated the creation of the "Large Apple Growers Association," dedicated to sustainable water management. In conclusion, the Sustain Sebou Farming project, as part of the SWF, has made substantial progress in enhancing sustainable water management practices in apple farming. It has successfully engaged the local community, shared valuable insights, and demonstrated the benefits of responsible water use. The project's approach serves as a model for addressing water management challenges in agriculture.

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